Historic, archived document

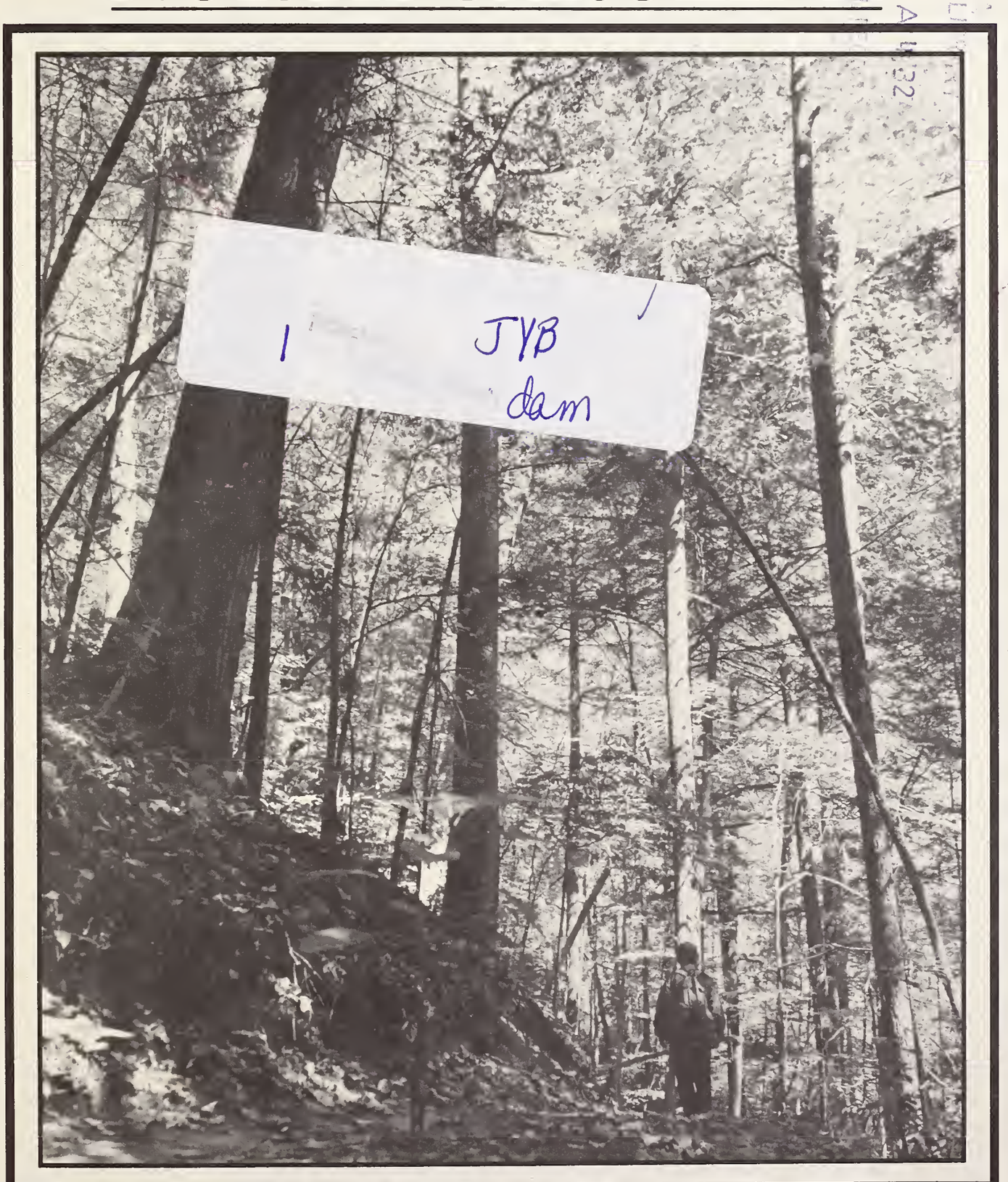
Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

aSD11
.U5936

NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH CAROLINA

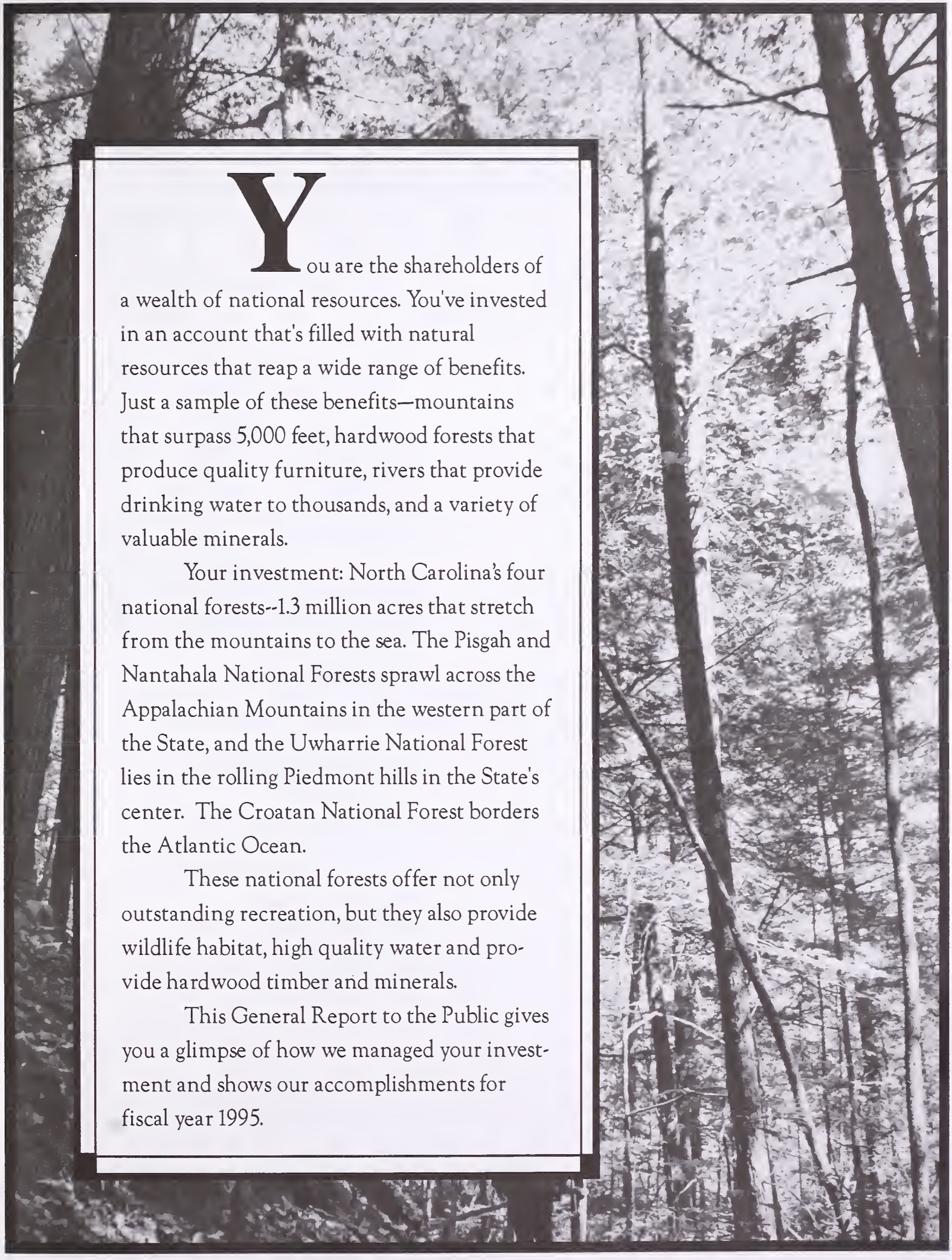
Ind

USDA FOREST SERVICE
1995 OCT -2 AM 9:32
ATLANTA, GA



1 JYB
dam

1995 General Report to the Public



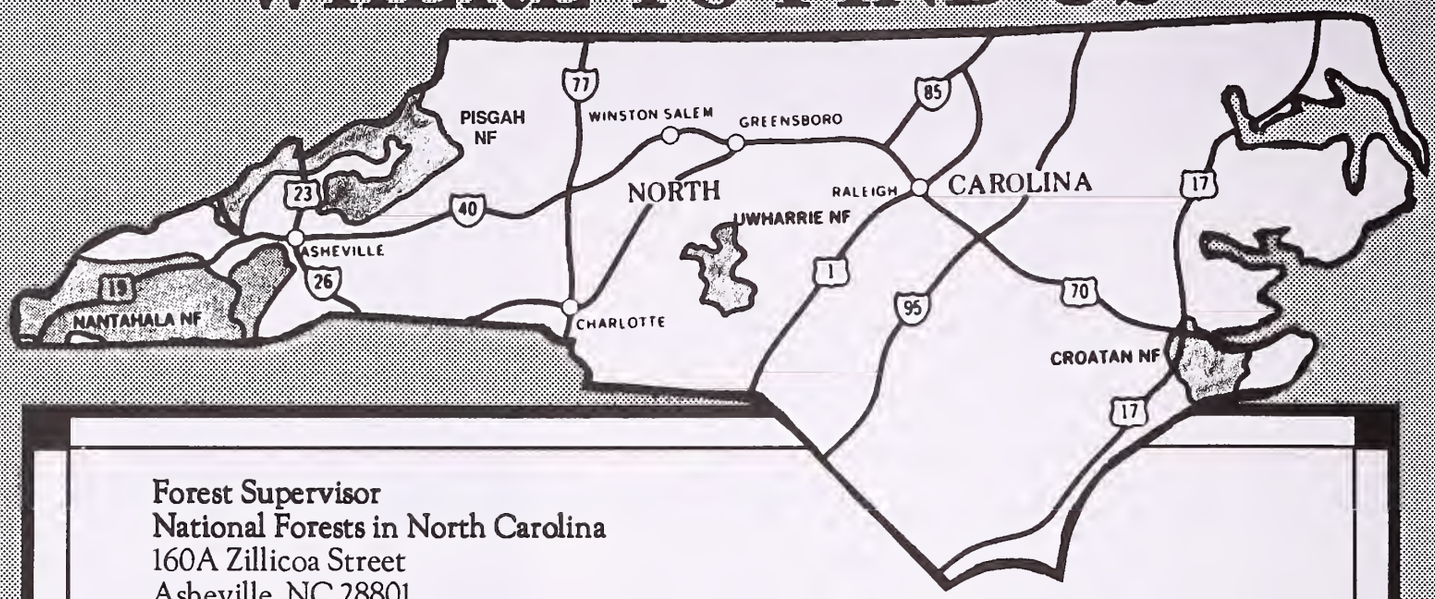
You are the shareholders of a wealth of national resources. You've invested in an account that's filled with natural resources that reap a wide range of benefits. Just a sample of these benefits—mountains that surpass 5,000 feet, hardwood forests that produce quality furniture, rivers that provide drinking water to thousands, and a variety of valuable minerals.

Your investment: North Carolina's four national forests--1.3 million acres that stretch from the mountains to the sea. The Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests sprawl across the Appalachian Mountains in the western part of the State, and the Uwharrie National Forest lies in the rolling Piedmont hills in the State's center. The Croatan National Forest borders the Atlantic Ocean.

These national forests offer not only outstanding recreation, but they also provide wildlife habitat, high quality water and provide hardwood timber and minerals.

This General Report to the Public gives you a glimpse of how we managed your investment and shows our accomplishments for fiscal year 1995.

WHERE TO FIND US



Forest Supervisor
National Forests in North Carolina
160A Zillicoa Street
Asheville, NC 28801
(704) 257-4200
(Take UNCA exit off U.S. 19/23,
go toward UNCA to first right)

Croatan National Forest
141 E. Fisher Avenue
New Bern, NC 28560
(919) 638-5628
(Off U.S. 70 south of New Bern.)

Uwharrie National Forest
Route 3
Troy, NC 27371
(910) 576-6391
(2 miles east of Troy on NC 24/17)

Nantahala National Forest
Cheoah Ranger District
Route 1, Box 16A
Robbinsville, NC 28771
(704) 479-6431
(On U.S. 129 north of Robbinsville)

Highlands Ranger District
2010 Flat Mountain Road,
Highlands, NC 28741
(704) 526-3765
(Follow the sign from U.S. 64
east of Highlands)

Tusquitee Ranger District
201 Woodland Drive
Murphy, NC 28906
(704) 837-5152
(Off U.S. 64 east of Murphy)

Wayah Ranger District
90 Sloan Road
Franklin, NC 28734
(704) 524-6441
(Turn at sign on U.S. 64
west of Franklin)

Pisgah National Forest
French Broad Ranger District
Toecane Ranger District
P.O Box 128
Burnsville, NC 28714
(704) 682-6146
(On U.S. 19-E bypass in Burnsville.)

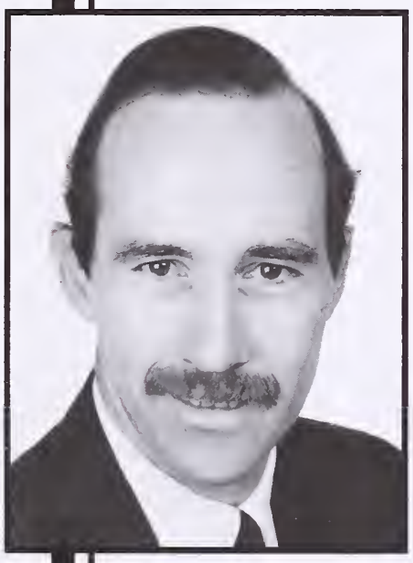
Grandfather Ranger District
Route 1, Box 110-A
Nebo, NC 28761
(704) 652-2144
(At exit 90, Nebo/Lake James Exit,
off I-40, 9 miles east of Marion)

Pisgah Ranger District
1001 Pisgah Highway
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768
(704) 877-3350
(On U.S. 276 north of Brevard)

Dear Friends and Customers,

The goal of this general report is to give you a picture of how we manage your national forests in North Carolina and what we accomplished in fiscal year 1995. Most of all, we want to show you where we stand in meeting our mission of caring for the land and serving people.

The past year was a real challenge for us, as future years will be. The Federal government is downsizing, and the Forest Service is no exception. In North Carolina, we have lost 20 percent of our workforce in the last 2 years, without a matching reduction in work. I am really proud of the way our employees have pulled together and found new ways to provide the same high-quality management of your forests and service to you.



We are continuing to implement the Nantahala and Pisgah Forest Plan and the changes that resulted from the plan's amendment released 2 years ago. Revision of the Croatan and Uwharrie Management Plan will get under way in 1996 and should be completed sometime next year.

We will continue to use the best science available to ensure that these forests' unique diversity will be sustained and that they will be around for future generations to enjoy.

Our partnerships with State of North Carolina agencies, Federal agencies, and other organizations were key to meeting our 1995 goals in forest resource management. Cooperative agreements helped us make ideas become a reality and increased the benefits offered on the national forests. Through these agreements, improvements in wildlife habitat, hiking trails, and campgrounds--to name a few--were accomplished.

Our continued success depends on how effectively we communicate with you. We welcome hearing and receiving your ideas and concerns, so we can better serve you. If you have any questions that aren't answered in this report, please contact us.

Thank you for your continued interest and involvement in the management of the National Forests in North Carolina. Your support helps us produce a level of goods and services that will profit you and future generations.

Sincerely,

RANDLE G. PHILLIPS
Forest Supervisor

1995 General Report Table of Contents

Our Mission 1
Recreation 1
Wilderness and W&S Rivers 2
Lands 3
Timber 4
Fire 5
Heritage Resources 5
Fish 6
Wildlife 6
Working Together 7
Soil & Water 8
Air 9
Botany 10
SAA 11
Human Resources 12
Rural Development 13
Minerals 14
Roads 14
Olympic Preparation 15
New Grandfather Office 15
Responding to Reinvention Call 16
Streamlining Workforce 16
Forest Helps Local Economies 17
New Forest Supervisor's Office 17
Payments to Counties 18
Accomplishments 19

Our Mission:
managing for a variety of uses

By law, national forests are managed for many different uses—outdoor recreation, range, sustainable timber production, watershed protection, wildlife and fish habitat, and wilderness.

Management plans are developed to ensure the best mix of multiple uses, while maintaining the integrity of forest ecosystems. Our management plans are the blueprints for how the forests will be managed, combining land uses into certain management areas.

The management plan for the Croatan and Uwharrie National Forests is due for revision by 1997. Changes will be made to those parts of the management plan where new information or a new management philosophy makes the current plan out-of-date. New approaches to fire management and longleaf pine ecosystem restoration are among the changes likely to be included in the revised plan.

The Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan underwent a significant amendment in 1994, which is being implemented. All forest management plans are available at the forest supervisor's office.

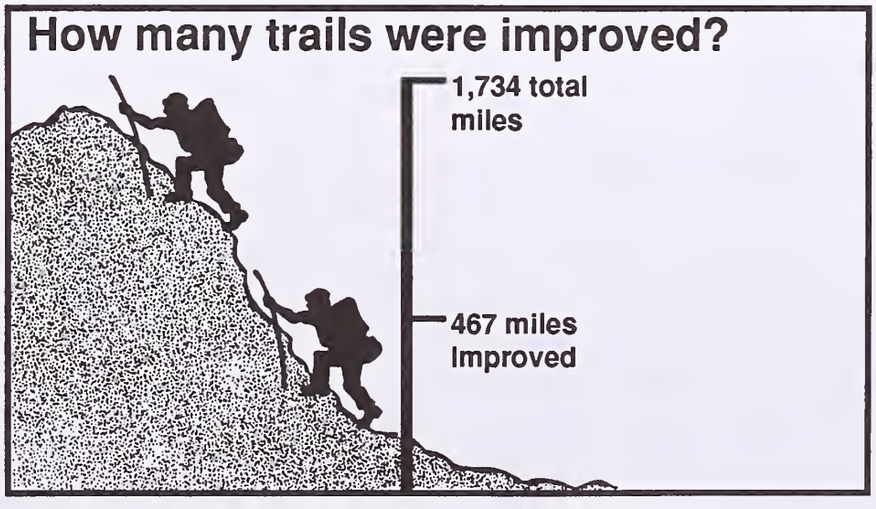
Recreation
19 million visit forests

In 1995, more than 19 million people visited the National Forests in North Carolina, making the national forests the largest single outdoor recreation provider in the State and the eighth largest national forest recreation provider in the Nation. Our visitors enjoyed driving for pleasure, camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, and adventure sports such as whitewater rafting and rock climbing. While most visitors are from the Southeast, a growing number came from across the United States and many foreign countries.

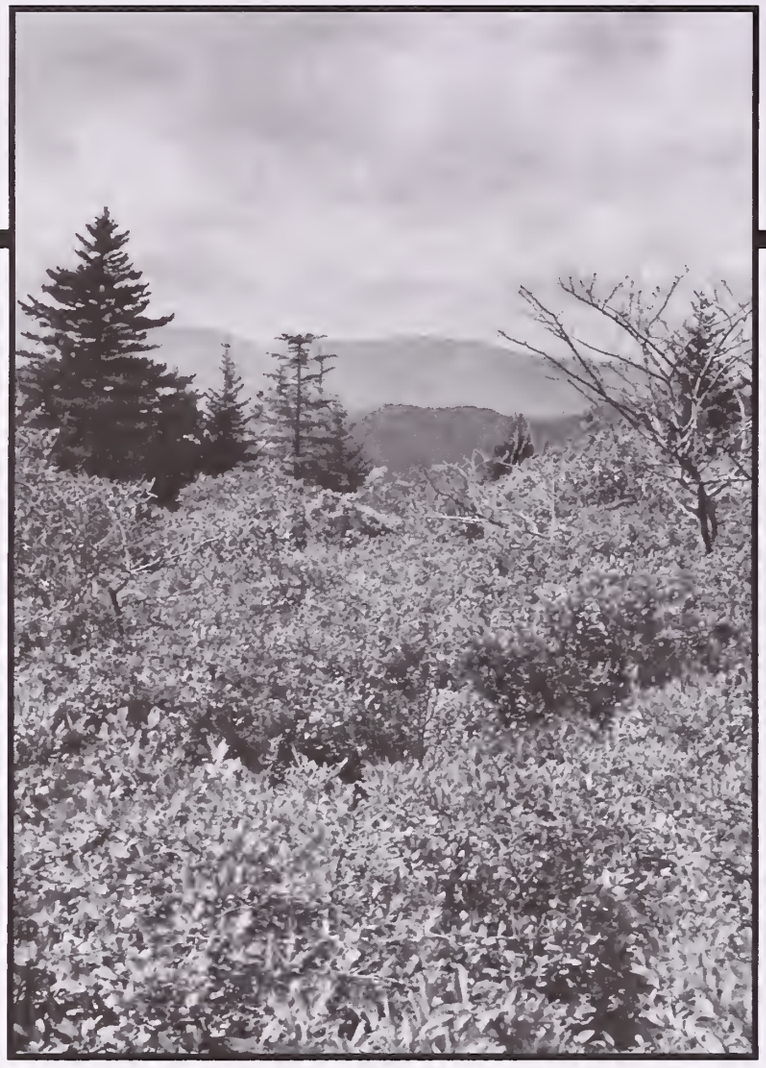
Our recreation areas include 34 campgrounds, 43 day-use picnic areas, 28 boating sites, 18 observation areas, 14 interpretive sites, and more than 1,700 miles of trail. Outside assistance from concessionaires and many volunteers make it possible to keep these areas open and available for public use.

The Cradle of Forestry in America, site of the Nation's first forestry school, is on the Pisgah National Forest. The site includes a major new interpretive wing completed in 1995 and offers outdoor interpretive trails that emphasize local history and the value of American forestry. Construction of permanent exhibits will begin in 1997. Future construction at the Cradle will include completion of the new education wing, replacement of electrical and water lines, and other related projects.

In 1996, we will complete a new campground at Badin Lake on the Uwharrie National Forest. Work continues on rehabilitation of Flanners Beach Campground on the Croatan National Forest. Major improvements to the Croatan's Cedar Point Campground and Brices Creek Day-Use Area were finished in 1995.



On the Nantahala National Forest, a new boat launch facility opened at Cheoah Point in 1995. Initial scoping is under way to improve boat launch facilities at Cable Cove in future



One breathtaking view of one of our wildernesses.

years. A new toilet building opened and electricity was provided at the Whitewater Falls Day-Use Area. We are constructing a new bike-washing station and toilet building at the Tsali Recreation Area trailhead. Improvements are also under way in the Nantahala Gorge—one of the Nation's most popular whitewater rafting rivers. These improvements include a new toilet building at the put-in area, an expanded viewing area, and access at the beaching area downstream.

In conjunction with the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, we have been working to plan recreation facilities and interpretive themes for the new Overhill Skyway—a 44-mile scenic drive that will link Robbinsville, NC, with Tellico Plains, TN. The final segment is in the process of construction, and the road should be completed in 1997.

Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers

Eleven wildernesses encompass more than 103,000 acres on the four North Carolina national forests. Each year over 200,000 people visit these areas, which range in size from 1,600 to 18,500 acres. Wildernesses are managed to restore and preserve the land's natural ecosystems and offer visitors a place for solitude and a primitive recreation experience. These goals are accomplished by maintaining wilderness trails to primitive standards, restoring overused campsites, educating users about wilderness ethics, and providing users with alternative "backcountry" experiences.

Several research projects are under way in North Carolina wildernesses. These include vegetation inventories, documenting how prior disturbances have shaped current landscape conditions, and ozone monitoring.

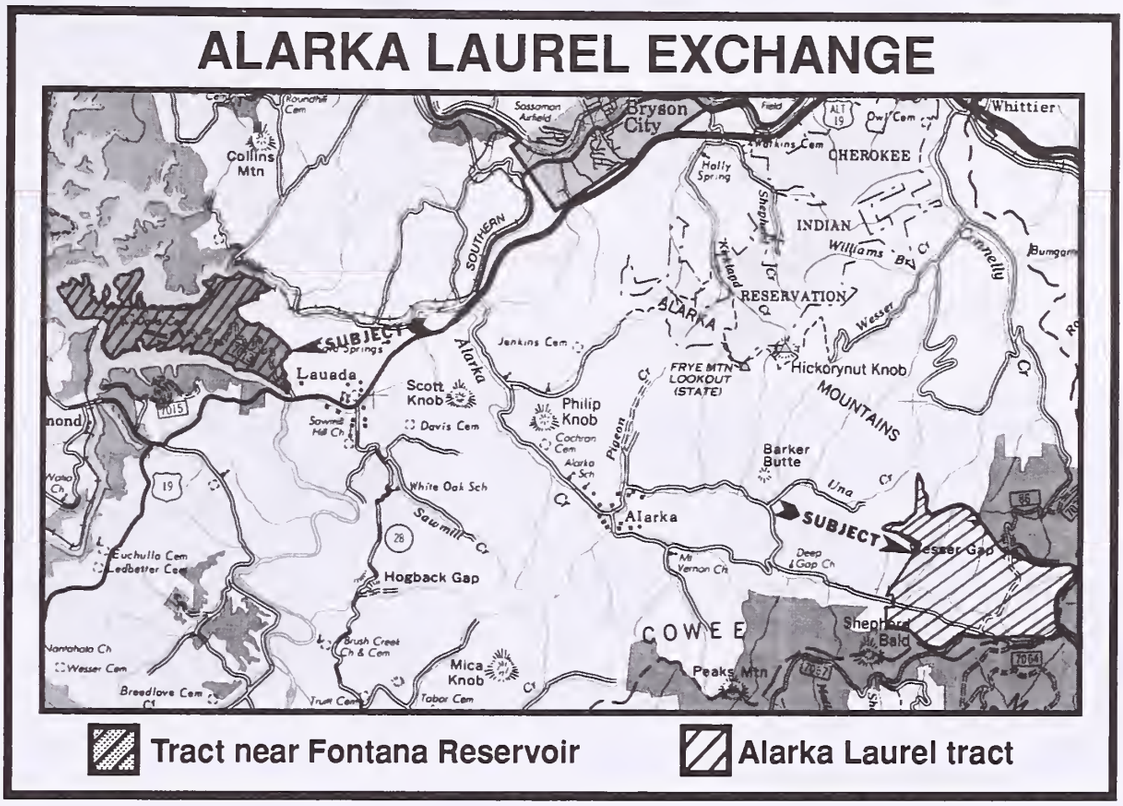
We recommended an additional 15,230 acres for wilderness designation in the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests' Land Management Plan. These areas are Harper Creek, Lost Cove, and Craggy Mountain.

Two rivers, the Chattooga and the Horsepasture, are designated as national wild and scenic rivers. The Nolichucky River was recommended for wild and scenic designation, which was submitted to Congress. Studies are in progress on the Mills River system. Several other rivers were recommended for study and will be evaluated as part of the next forest land management plan revision.

■

Lands:
managing Forest Service property

The lands program manages the property interests of the Forest Service. This program includes stewardship activities, such as marking and maintaining landlines, boundary adjustments through land acquisition, exchange and donation, and managing other uses of forest lands through special-use permits, easements, and rights-of-way.



In 1995, land was purchased in two primary areas to protect the Appalachian National Scenic Trail corridor the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River. Nineteen tracts, totaling 1,035 acres, were acquired in 1995 in these two areas. Future acquisition of several additional tracts along the Appalachian Trail is necessary to completely protect the trail corridor. Opportunities also exist to acquire several important tracts in the Chattooga watershed's headwaters.

One large land exchange was completed and several were under way in 1995. The Alarka Laurel exchange on the Wayah Ranger District was carried out in partnership with the Trust for Public Land. We exchanged the Davis Cemetery tract for the Alarka Laurel parcel. This transaction puts into Federal ownership a 2,056-acre upland parcel with high-value wildlife, timber, and recreation, while making a parcel along Fontana Reservoir available for local private development.

The Rosman Research Station Exchange is near completion. In exchange for the Rosman site, the forest will receive 3,341 acres in Jackson County, three district ranger offices, and mineral interests on 15,457 acres of Federal land in Mitchell County.

Through this exchange, the public will gain land for hunting, fishing, and multiple uses. The Forest Service will save administrative costs by not having to pay rent for district offices in Burnsville, Marion, and Hot Springs. In addition, the Rosman site in private ownership should generate jobs and benefit Transylvania County.

Also in progress is an 800-acre exchange on the Toecane Ranger District, the Wilson exchange, which will significantly improve forest ownership patterns. Work is almost complete on a 95.9-acre donation of land to the Croatan National Forest by the Weyerhauser Company. This donation includes wetlands along scenic Brices Creek, which will protect the recreation experiences of creek users.

In addition, the forest was donated three tracts of land totaling 77 acres, which are located on the Grandfather District.

Timber:
improving the forest

Two-aged regeneration method.

In 1995, we reforested 3,261 acres of pine and hardwood forests. These areas were restocked with young trees, either by planting seedlings or natural regeneration from seed, young trees already on the site, and sprouts.

Timber stand improvement work was completed on 2,477 acres of young timber stands. The work included pre-commercial thinning of over-dense stands of trees and release of newly established trees from competition with brush and other vegetation.

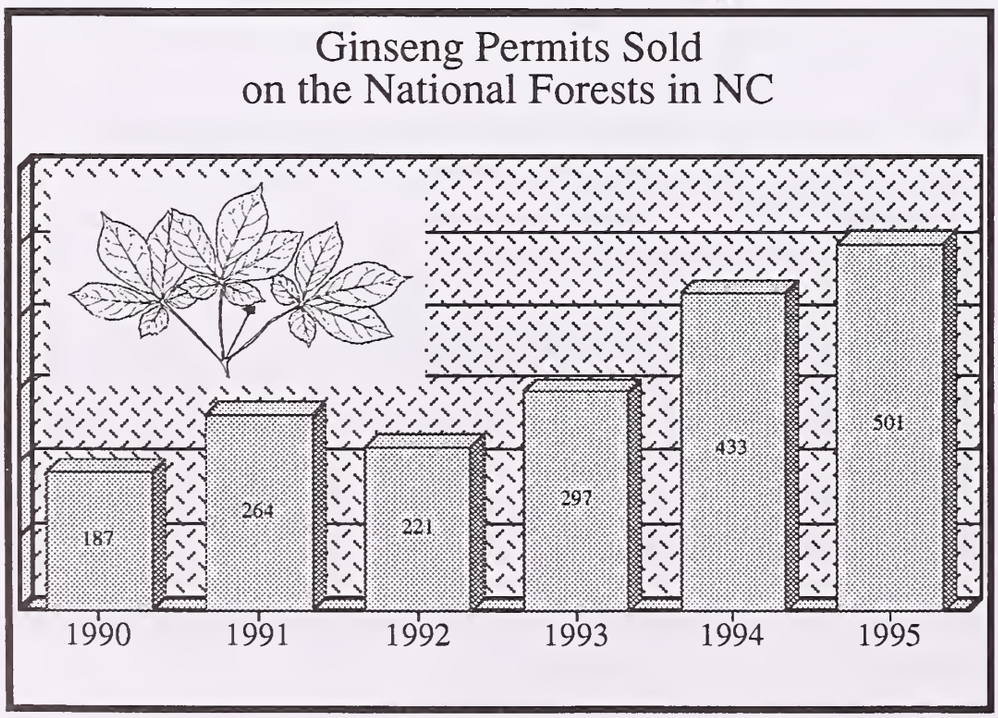
The purpose of these treatments is to improve growing conditions for the crop trees. To ensure adequate tree growth, fertilizer was applied to areas where soil nutrients were deficient.

We use several harvest methods: two-aged, selection, shelterwood, and clearcut. The most prominent methods are two-aged and selection.

The selection method harvests small groups of trees from the stand. Over four to six successive harvests, the entire stand is harvested. The interval between harvests is usually about 10-20 years. The size of the small openings is an area with a diameter about 1 1/2 times the height of the surrounding timber.

The two-aged method (see diagram) involves retention of a number of trees over the harvest area to grow along with the new regeneration. Trees are identified for retention for several reasons. Commonly, the trees are retained so they can grow and gain value for future harvests; provide various components of wildlife habitat, especially mast production; and help the appearance of the harvest area until new trees have grown up. The retention trees are expected to remain on the area for a minimum of 40-60 years.

Of the 2,718 acres regenerated through timber harvest in 1995, 47 percent were two aged, 30 percent were selection, and 23 percent were shelterwood and clearcut. Other trees were harvested through stand-tending activities, such as thinning and salvage of dead and damaged trees.



Timber also administers the special forest products program. In 1995, timber issued 3,301 of these permits. A total of 2,105 permits were sold for non-convertible products, which include such plants as ginseng, rhododendron, galax. and azalea. An increasingly popular plant to harvest is ginseng (see graph). Fraser fir seedlings are also a top choice--539,000 seedlings were sold on the Toecane District. Other forest product permits sold were: firewood, 997; sawtimber, 149; and small roundwood, 50.

Fire: battling blazes, supporting relief efforts

In 1995, about 200 of our employees and Job Corps members helped fight wildfires. In addition, almost 400 employees worked stand-by during extreme fire weather conditions.

In North Carolina, we fought 80 forest fires that burned 1,117 acres. In addition, several hundred workdays were spent helping to battle blazes in other States.

The Southern Region Interagency Hotshot Crew, a group of specially trained firefighters, completed another successful season. The National Forests in North Carolina hosted this crew. The crew also assisted on 20 wildfires and more than 8,000 acres of prescribed burns in the South.

Forest firefighters prescribed burned 9,400 acres to prepare areas for tree planting, improve wildlife habitat, maintain mountain balds, and reduce hazardous buildups of wildfire fuels.

We were also called on to help with Hurricanes Marilyn and Opal in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Florida, and Alabama. Fifty of our employees participated in these relief efforts. Four of our employees took part in rescue and recovery efforts after the bombing in Oklahoma City.

Heritage Resources

Forest archeologists conduct inventories on national forest land to locate, evaluate, and protect heritage resources, such as prehistoric and historic archeological sites.

In 1995, they inventoried 9,700 acres and recorded 305 archeological sites. To date, nearly 8 percent of national forest land has been inventoried, and more than 3,500 sites located. Fourteen archeological sites—seven prehistoric (from 400 to 7,000 years old) and seven historic (from 80 to 200 years old) have been test-excavated to determine their significance. Archeologists determined that an historic tar kiln site (used for processing longleaf pine into pitch for ships) was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The site, located on the Croatan National Forest, was dated circa 1750.

Passport-In-Time volunteers screen for artifacts at the Appletree Archeological Site.

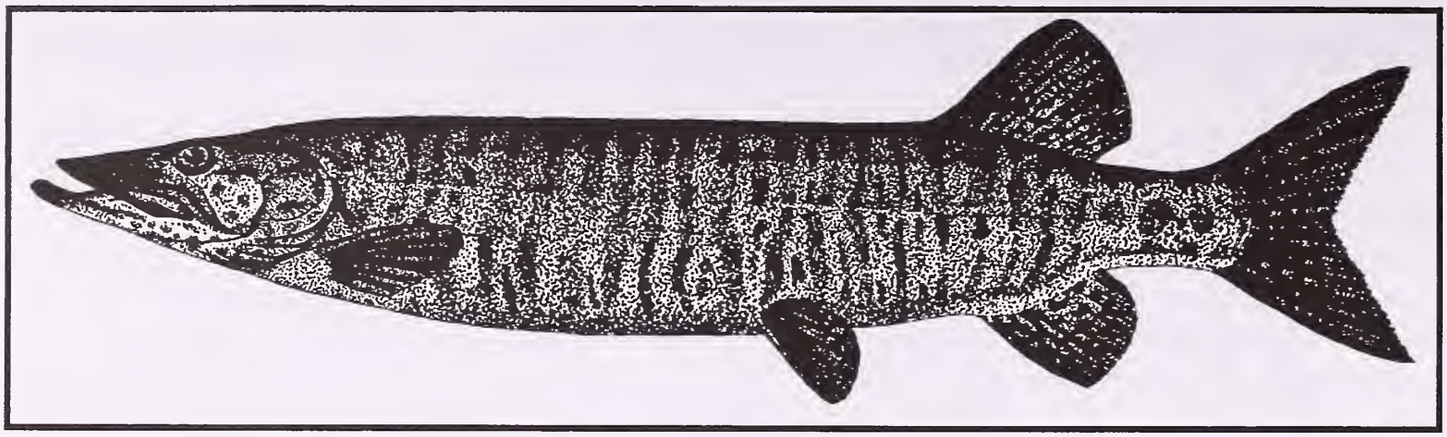
We started the forest-wide Fire Tower Study in 1995. Fourteen towers are being recorded and evaluated. We should complete the study in 1996.

Western Carolina University archeological field school students and Passport-In-Time volunteers participated in the second study at the Wayah District's Appletree site. A total of 125 volunteers from eight states and New Zealand donated 4,934 hours.

With the Otarre Chapter of the North Carolina Archeological Society, we hosted the Archeological Field Day at Appletree for 300 people.

In cooperation with Weyerhauser and the New Bern Historial Society, the Croatan National Forest is developing a Civil War interpretive site.

Working with the North Carolina Department of Corrections, the Uwharrie National Forest maintains the Thornburg House, one of the oldest post offices in North Carolina.



Muskellunge

Aquatic Life

The Fisheries Program provides a variety of fishing opportunities, protects and improves fish habitat, maintains and enhances fish diversity, and educates the public about fisheries on the National Forests in North Carolina.

One 1995 fisheries activity was surveying aquatic proposed, endangered, threatened, and sensitive species. We conducted surveys of mollusks and crayfish on the Uwharrie and Croatan National Forests and freshwater mussels in the Little Tennessee River below Franklin. In the Mills River System, we inventoried fish and freshwater mussels.

In addition, we stocked streams with brook trout with funding assistance from the North Carolina Council of Trout Unlimited. To determine the distribution of this native species, we worked with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to complete an inventory of all Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest streams. This inventory began in 1990. Distribution maps and narratives will be prepared during 1996.

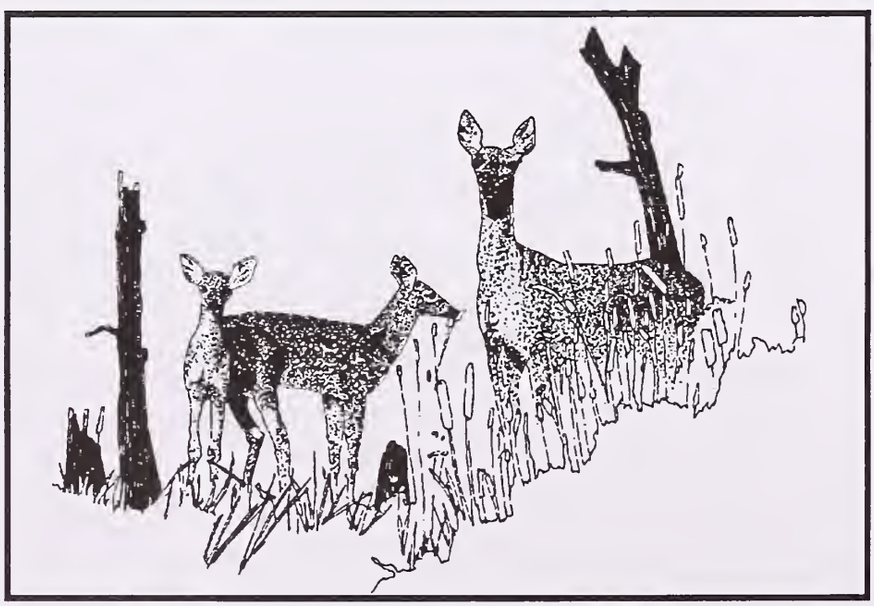
In another inventory, we worked with the commission to monitor trout population trends to see how land management practices affect these populations. Since 1989, we have surveyed 15 streams on the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests.

In 1995, we monitored the warm water fisheries on the National Forests in North Carolina. Forest Service and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission biologists are monitoring fish populations on the Uwharrie and Croatan National Forests. We also looked at the effects of large woody debris on trout habitat.

Wildlife

The National Forests in North Carolina are home to over 500 different types of animals, including birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Of these animals, 20 percent are listed as federally threatened or endangered. The forests are home to many unique species, such as the Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel, Junaluska Salamander, Regal Fritillary Butterfly, and Peregrine Falcon.

Wildlife Continued/next page



Wildlife Continued

The Wildlife Program's goal is to provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife for public enjoyment. These habitats should be diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable, so a variety of wildlife can live on the national forests.

Since North Carolina's national forests lie near many major cities, wildlife recreation is in high demand. Wildlife viewing, photography, and hunting are some favorite types of recreation. Visitors can hunt for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, wild boar, black bear, gray squirrel, cottontail rabbit, ruffed grouse, bobwhite quail, woodcock, and waterfowl.

Red-Cockaded Woodpecker

In 1995, the forest improved 1,692 acres of wildlife habitat, built and installed 305 structures, and conducted inventories on 1,733 acres. Challenge cost-share (CCS) projects with our cooperators account for many important wildlife improvement projects.

Working together: wildlife partnerships

The National Forests in North Carolina completes many habitat improvement projects through challenge cost-share (CCS) projects and partnerships with cooperators.Through the CCS program, cooperators contribute to half of the project's cost. The following is a list of partners and the work they helped to accomplish:

- **North Carolina State Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation**

Through CCS projects, three JAKES events were held on the Nantahala and Uwharrie National Forests. The JAKES program--the National Wild Turkey Federation's youth hunter education program--stands for Juniors Acquiring Knowledge Ethics and Sportsmenship. Over 150 youths and adults participated in these three events.

The federation also helped to develop and improve grass and forb wildlife openings, seed and gate closed logging roads, plant softmast-producing shrub species, and prescribe burn for habitat improvement.

- **North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and Ducks Unlimited**

These groups helped provide shallow water wetland habitat on the Croatan National Forest's Catfish Lake Impoundment. The impoundment now offers opportunities for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing.

Croatan National Forest employees assisted the commission in conducting hunter bag check surveys and waterfowl surveys on the Catfish Lake Impoundment.

- **North Carolina State University**

Under an agreement with North Carolina State University, red-cockaded woodpecker colonies were monitored on the Croatan National Forest. Another active colony was located during 1995. Keeping a close watch on this woodpecker--a federally listed endangered species--is important in managing its recovery.

- **University of Tennessee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**
- **North Carolina Wildlife Resources Agency,**
- **Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and**
- **Cherokee and Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests**

We entered into a multi-agency CCS agreement with these partners to determine the distribution, abundance, and habitat ecology of the cerulean warbler. The study was focused in east Tennessee, north Georgia, and western North Carolina.

- **North Carolina State University**
- **Southern Research Station-Clemson University**

We conducted two neotropical migratory bird CCS research projects. The project determined the habitat relationships of neotropical migratory birds in cove and upland hardwood sites in response to timber management activities.

- **Highlands Biological Station**

A two-year research project was completed in 1995. The project determined the population and distribution of the Junaluska salamander.

- **Alcoa and USFWS**

Through a CCS project, we conducted periodic aerial surveys for bald eagles on Uwharrie National Forest's Badin Lake.

- **North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission**

Black bear bait station surveys were conducted to monitor black bear population trends. We also helped the commission collect black bear hunter harvest data during the hunting season.

- **Ruffed Grouse Society**

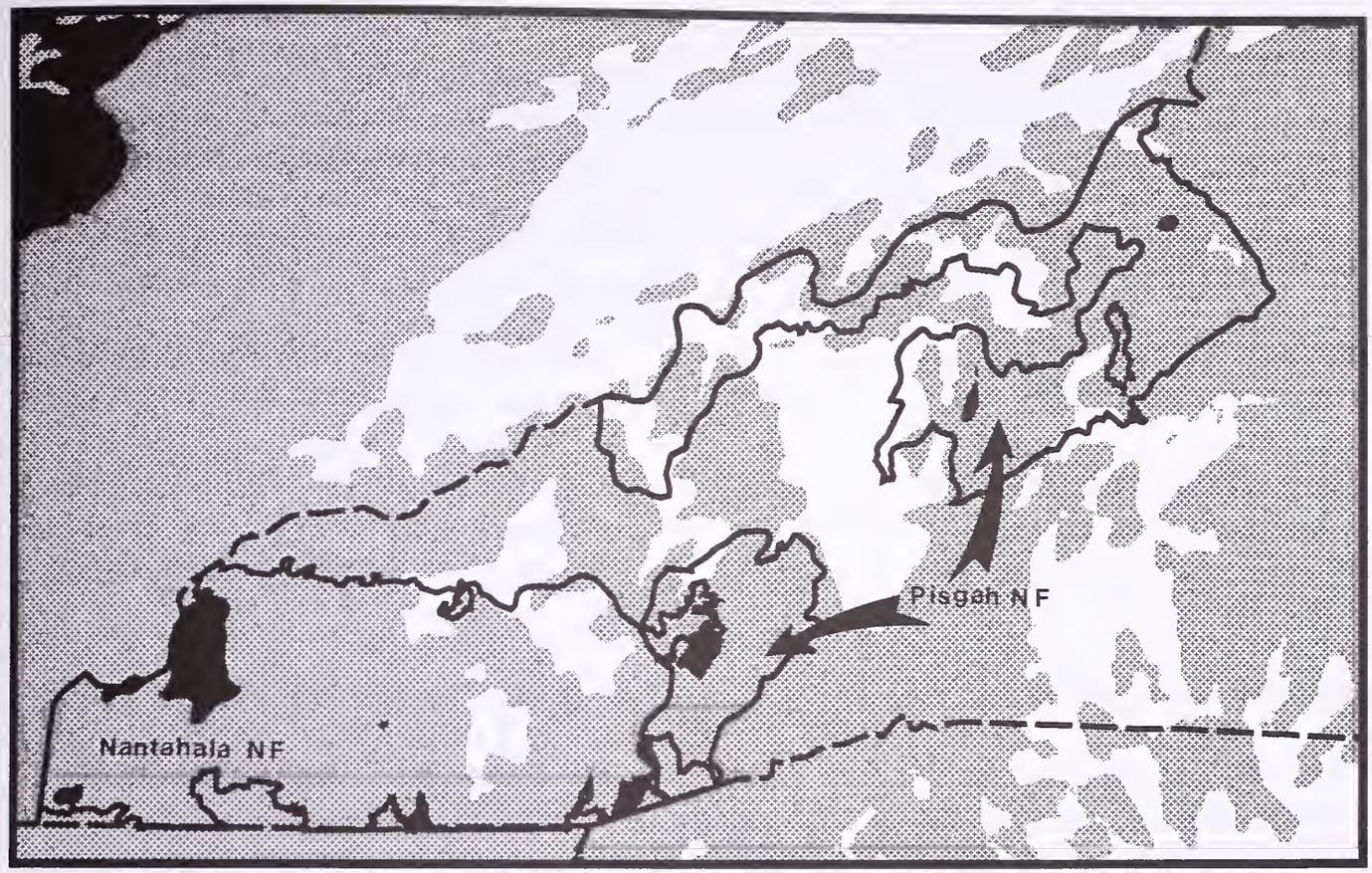
Cooperated in planning of projects to improve habitat for ruffed grouse and similar species requiring some younger forest habitat.

Soil & Water: our most basic resouces

Maintaining pure water in national forest watersheds remains one of our primary concerns. Forest Service hydrologists and soil scientists work to protect and enhance the soil and water resources of our forests. In areas where basic resource information is lacking, resource inventories are conducted.

All land-disturbing activities—natural and human caused—may affect soil and water. Proposed land management activities, such as trails or roads, are evaluated for potential soil and water effects. Pratices to protect soil and water qualities are recommended if needed.

In 1995, watershed improvements were made on 126 acres. These improvements included repairing eroded, abandoned roads, and controlling road runoff to streams. Another 40 acres were improved through activities associated with timber sales. Soil resource inventories were conducted on 33,154 acres, and 10,500 acres of water resources were inventoried.



Sulfate Deposition Mean of Annual Value for 1983-1990

less than 20 | 20 - 30 | greater than 40

Air: determining air quality impacts

The air resource specialist spent much of 1995 working on a regional planning effort called the Southern Appalachian Assessment (SAA). The assessment will help us better understand how national forest management affects the Southern Appalachian area.

The SAA atmospheric section will present regional information on many aspects of air quality. The sulfate deposition modeling result, shown above, is an example of the information compiled from the SAA. The sulfate deposition map was produced from model results that combine information on rainfall, elevation, and sulfate levels measured in the rain. For 1983-1990, the map shows the average sulfate deposition in kilograms per hectare.

Most of the forest's soils are developed from rocks that have a low ability to offset or buffer acid deposition, resulting from sulfates.

Some scientists are concerned that annual sulfate deposition inputs greater than 20 kilograms per hectare (17.8 pounds per acre) could have negative impacts on the forest. The map above shows that most forest areas are receiving greater than 20 kilograms per hectare. Some areas, such as Shining Rock Wilderness and Joyce Kilmer/Slickrock Wilderness, are receiving even more than twice that amount of sulfates.

What impact could excessive acidic deposition have on the Forest? Acidic deposition in rainfall moves through the soil and eventually flows into streams and rivers. Along the way, soil chemicals may offset acid deposition's negative effects. Forest soils that have an inability to offset acid deposition can become acidic and can release aluminum from the soil into rivers, which can kill fish and other aquatic organisms, such as mayflies and caddis flies.

Botany:
managing a variety of unique plants

Covering three geographic regions—Coastal Plain, Southern Piedmont, and Southern Blue Ridge Mountains—the National Forests in North Carolina contain more proposed, endangered, threatened and sensitive plant species than any other national forest in the United States.

Located on North Carolina's national forests are many plant communities, including rare and unique types, such as longleaf pine/ wiregrass and pocosins found on the Croatan National Forest, chalk maple on the Uwharrie National Forest, serpentine barrens on the Nantahala National Forest, and high elevation communities of red spruce/Fraser fir and grassy balds on the Pisgah National Forest.

With such a rich diversity of plant communities, botanists conduct surveys to increase the base of information. These surveys show how we should manage to sustain unique communities and rare plants.

Reflecting the importance of the Forest Botany Program, the forest added a third full-time botanist on the Nantahala National Forest in 1995.

To restore one of the forest's rarest plant communities, we conducted a 50-acre prescribed burn at the Buck Creek serpentine barrens. The site consists of pitch pine/white oak/prairie grass savanna. Fourteen sensitive plant species are found on this special-interest area.

Monitoring of the burn showed a dramatic increase in flowering for prairie dropseed. Monitoring this area were weekend volunteers from the Forest Service, Western Carolina University, North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Nature Conservancy, the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, and the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program.

In 1995, we began to develop a strategy to conserve the rock gnome lichen, a species recently listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as threatened.

As a cooperative project involving the USFWS, the North Carolina Arboretum, the USDA Forest Service, and the University of Georgia, 1,200 seedlings of the threatened Heller's blazingstar were transplanted to the Linville Gorge area on the Pisgah National Forest's Grandfather Ranger District.

Only eight known remaining populations

See next page

Top, Gray's lily, left, yellow lady's slipper. We manage habitat for these species to maintain their health and population size.

Botany/continued

of this species exist in the world, and one of these populations is found on the Grandfather Ranger District. The USFWS funded a genetics study with the University of Georgia to determine the genotype of each known population. Seeds were collected from the Linville Gorge population, and seedlings were raised at the North Carolina Arboretum.

Post-transplant monitoring indicated survival rate better than 90 percent at the Linville Gorge site. Over 3,000 seedlings were successfully raised by the North Carolina Arboretum. An additional 1,800 seedlings were transplanted to other known population sites in western North Carolina.

Because of this project's success, we may apply the same method to future transplanting efforts.

Growing in very thin soils, Heller's blazingstar is found along hot, dry clifflines. The main threat to this species is heavy foot travel.

To tell about this unique habitat and how to protect it, interpretive signs are posted along the trails near Table Rock.

SAA: digging deeper for answers

In 1995, the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Cooperative (SAMAB) conducted research for the Southern Appalachian Assessment (SAA), a document scheduled for release in May 1996.

The SAA will include four technical documents and one summary report. These documents will focus on the region's aquatic resources, atmospheric resources, human dimension (including an updated roadless area inventory, timber supply and demand analysis) and recreation supply and demand analysis, and terrestrial features (covering both wildlife and forest health issues).

SAMAB—a group of State and Federal agencies—works to promote the twin goals of sustainable development and healthy ecosystems in the six-State southern Appalachian area.

The project grew from questions about the state of the environment in the area. Those questions were developed in a series of public meetings throughout the southern Appalachians.

Southern Appalachian national forests participated in the assessment. These forests include the National Forests in Alabama, the Jefferson in Virginia, the Chattahoochee-Oconee in Georgia, and the Sumter in South Carolina, as well as the Nantahala and Pisgah in North Carolina.

We gained valuable information by combining our existing databases with other data from other agencies, including the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Environmental Protection Agency, and State and private researchers. We now have larger-scale inventories, more-applicable analysis tools, and new interpretive techniques.

The findings from the SAA will be extremely useful as all national forests in the southern Appalachians begin work on revising current land management plans.

For more information on the SAA, contact our forest planning team at 704-257-4200.

Human Resources:

programs benefit the young and elderly

A Job Corps student puts up drywall in a building to be used for the Head Start Program.

We offer several human resource programs that benefit both the young and elderly. These programs not only provide employment, but offer training skills and education on the national forests.

The enrollees of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) continue to play a vital role in our workforce. The enrollees' average age is 68, and their productivity and positive attitude continue to amaze us.

With constraints placed on budgets and hiring, these "Older Americans" enable the forest to achieve a great variety and quantity of work. From cleaning campgrounds to giving directions with a smile to constructing picnic shelters and trails, SCSEP enrollees help carry out the mission of serving the public. In 1995, 294 Older Americans generated work valued at $2.9 million.

The Job Corps Program gives America's disadvantaged youths a new start at completing their high school education and learning a new trade, which makes them marketable in the job world. These youths, from ages 16-21, attend two Job Corps Centers (JCC)—Schenck JCC on the Pisgah National Forest's Pisgah District and Lyndon B. Johnson JCC on the Nantahala National Forest's Wayah District.

This year 162 Job Corps students earned the State of North Carolina General Education High School Diplomas. In addition to training, the students also complete training projects in nearby communities and the forest. In 1995, the estimated value of the student's work was $2.8 million. Some projects were: roofing at the Home for Battered Women in Brevard; masonry and paint projects at the Brevard Music Center; bridge construction for access to the Pisgah Fish Hatchery; picnic table construction for Franklin; and building flower boxes for Hendersonville.

The Host Program allows economically disadvantaged high school seniors to work after school for the Forest Service. The host enrollees, ages 14-19, are unable to stay in school without a job. The value of the work accomplished in FY '95 was $84,140. Some work projects were trail maintenance and construction.

The Youth Conservation Corps is a program where youth are employed. Twelve worked during June to September 1995 and contributed work valued at $17,860. Some work completed: trail maintenance, trail construction, wilderness management, and planting of apple trees for wildlife food.

The people of North Carolina and residents from across the United States continue to support our Volunteer Program. Some volunteer positions were: campground hosts, wilderness rangers, trail crews, and whitewater rangers. A total of 4,168 volunteers contributed 128 person years of work valued at $2.4 million.

Rural Development

We continue to assist rural communities through the Economic Recovery Program, Americorps, and the Forest Stewardship Program.

Under the 1990 Farm Bill's Economic Recovery Program, we presented rural counties with grants and helped these communities explore new opportunities for economic growth.

Graham County received a $10,000 grant to help develop a Targeted Industries Implementation Plan for Stecoah Valley. This plan will help the county diversify its economic base. Over the past 5 years, we have provided this mountain county with $96,477 in grants.

We helped a team write and implement a project to develop the lower Roanoke River communities by creating a network of nature-based tourism. Team members came from Bertie, Halifax, Northampton, and Washington Counties and the Conservation Fund and Coalition for Community Conservation. We also provided an economic recovery grant of $5,000 for the Roanoke River Greenway Project.

With the assistance of a $10,000 Forest Service Economic Diversification Studies Grant, Hyde County completed a study that started in 1994. The study's results will show the county how to diversify its economy and develop nature-based tourism.

Cherokee County is using a $10,000 Rural Development Grant to explore possible mining of building stone in the Vengence Creek area. This mining operation is expected to create jobs for more than 100 people.

We presented rural counties with grants and helped these communities explore new opportunities for economic growth.

In 1995, Tyrrell County completed a portion of the boardwalk and interpretive trail along the Scuppernong River near Columbus. We awarded a $5,000 Economic Recovery Grant in 1993, which helped to finance the project.

In addition, we enrolled two people under the Rural Development Americorps Program. One enrollee is working with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to help the community development planner create a plan for parks and recreation on the Cherokee Reservation. The other enrollee worked with the City of Asheville Parks and Recreation Department to help formulate and implement a plan to improve the parks and recreation area facilities in Asheville.

We continue to take part in North Carolina's Forest Stewardship Program. This multi-agency, State and Private Forestry effort helps private, nonindustrial landowners to manage their forests. Specialists, such as foresters, wildlife biologists, and recreation planners assist landowners in developing plans to protect resources and provide a variety of forest uses. In 1995, 328 plans were approved.

MINERALS

Many areas of reserved and outstanding mineral rights are located on North Carolina's national forests.

Minerals are an important natural resource on our national forests. The Forest Service facilitates the responsible exploration and extraction of minerals when these activities can be conducted in an environmentally sound manner. Activities must be integrated with planning and management of other resources and follow sound reclamation measures.

We manage mineral materials: building stone, aggregate, and sand. In the case of hard rock leasable minerals—gold, silver, copper, and zinc—the Forest Service works with the Bureau of Land Management. Many areas of reserved and outstanding mineral rights are located on North Carolina's national forests.

When a company or individual submits a permit application for exploration or mining, the Forest Service will determine the potential environmental impacts and work with the applicant on ways to minimize impacts to nearby resources. If the application is approved, reclamation is normally a part of the permit.

Many come to North Carolina to look for gem stones, for which the State is famous. Nonmechanical "rock hounding," which causes no significant surface disturbance, is allowed on the forests. The geological features of our national forests contribute to their recreational appeal.

Roads:

the forest's largest single capital investment

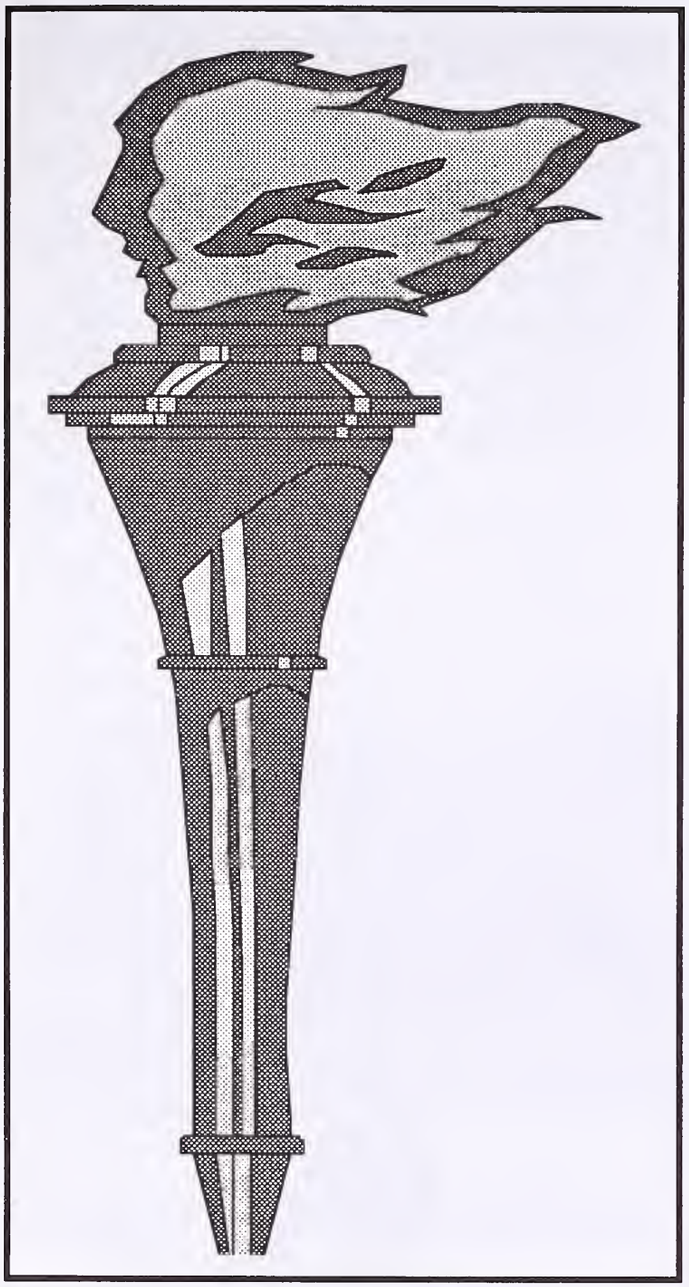
Over the last few years, severe weather hit North Carolina several times. The storms ranged from Hurricanes Hugo, Beryl, and Opal to more local, but large storms. In total, from Hurricane Hugo to Opal, the National Forests in North Carolina received about $11 million of damage to its transportation system. The type of damage ranged from minor road erosion to large slides.

In cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FWHA), we reacted quickly to these emergencies. We assessed damage, designed repairs, made repairs within personnel and equipment capabilities, and awarded contracts for those repairs we could not handle. The FHWA has financed the majority of repair work resulting from the storms.

Our partnership with the FHWA has been very positive. For this reason, we have quickly completed emergency repairs to protect the health and safety of users, private property, and adjacent land. The remainder of repairs will be finished over a longer period.

A critical element in preventing storm damage to roads is our ability to accomplish "everyday" routine maintenance. In past years, our funds were not sufficient to complete this work. However, we increased funds for road maintenance through shifts in budget planning, which allowed for more on-the-ground maintenance.

We hope this increased funding continues, so our largest single capital investment on the forests—the transportation system—can be adequately maintained.



Rolling out the red carpet for 1996 Olympics

The Centennial Olympic Games will take place July 19 to August 4, 1996, but preparations have been ongoing since 1990, when Atlanta was named the Olympic city. The Forest Service will be an integral part of the 1996 Olympics, with the whitewater slalom events held on the Ocoee River in Cherokee National Forest, TN.

The five national forests within a 3-hour radius of Atlanta are gearing up to host the estimated 400,000 who will travel to the Olympic games each day. In North Carolina, the Nantahala National Forest is expected to receive the greatest impact. Districts are sprucing up recreation areas by painting buildings, replacing picnic tables and grills, improving accessibility, upgrading information boards, and improving directional signing. The price tag for this preparation work is $174,000.

In addition, two new brochures will inform visitors about the Mountain Waters Scenic Byway and the Tsali Recreation Area and 100,000 copies of *Carolina Connections*—a visitor information guide—will be available at national forest offices and information centers.

Grandfather Office moves near I-40

In January 1995, the Grandfather District Office moved from the basement of the library in Marion to the I-40 off-ramp at Exit 90, the Lake James/Nebo Exit. This move makes the district office a very convenient location for travelers who need information. In 1993, over 8 million vehicles passed Exit 90.

A large reception area accommodates visitors to the district office. At the information counter, district employees sell maps, books, and other materials that encourage learning about the forest and its resources. The small book store is supplied by the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association, a nonprofit cooperative that uses earnings for interpretive and educational projects.

An exhibit area is being designed to interpret how the Pisgah National Forest and the people's uses and values of forest resources have changed over time. Some exhibit highlights will be large, historic photographs of the area in the early 1900's, many hands-on items and games, a real American chestnut tree killed by blight, and a small diorama of Table Rock's ecosystem. The Mountain Gateway Museum Service Center of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources is working closely with us to design and build all the historic exhibits.

Responding to Reinvention Call

In response to Vice President Gore's call to reinvent government, we conducted an internal study in 1995 to look at downsizing opportunities and ways to improve customer service.

Our Forest Leadership Team agreed to restructure from eight to six staff units, combining functions to better serve the public. This reorganization eliminated two GS-13 staff officer positions.

The French Broad Ranger District and the Toecane Ranger District combined administrative and resource functions. This union should prove to be cost-effective and bring greater efficiency to the forest.We believe both districts can be managed by a single administrative team, which will increase efficiency and save in salaries and equipment. We anticipate that the proposed consolidation would not significantly impact employees' jobs. Resource operations will continue to function out of the French Broad District office in Hot Springs. The merger represents a salary savings of one district ranger position and one business manager position.

Administrative realignment of the two Job Corps Centers—LBJ and Schenck—occurred in October. As part of a national reorganization of Job Corps, the two center directors now report to the director of the Washington Office's detached field office in Denver, CO, but all functions and staff will remain in North Carolina. Center directors formerly reported to the forest supervisor.

In another realignment, Law Enforcement and Investigation employees now report to the regional director in Atlanta, GA, with functions and staff remaining in North Carolina.

Forest streamlines workforce

In 1993, we estimated 22 positions needed to be reduced unless several employees retired under "optional" or "early-outs."

Under the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994, we received approval to offer voluntary separation incentives. In response to projected budget cuts in FY '96 and '97, our Forest Leadership Team established the "Position Management Team."

The team's purpose is to streamline the forest workforce through consolidating functions. The team is composed of a cross-section of line officers, administrative, and technical employees.

The result of budget reductions and workforce restructuring is fewer Federal employees.

Our task now is to focus on how we can work with the reductions and still provide quality service.

We are evaluating the priority of certain functions, so we can become a unit that is leaner, works better, and runs on a tighter budget.

How we help local economies

We helped boost North Carolina's towns and communities by spending $7.3 million through purchases and contracts.

During the year, we helped to boost North Carolina's towns and communities by spending $7.3 million through purchases and contracts.

Of this amount, $4.9 million were small business purchases and a total of $507,000 represented minority and women-owned businesses.

The 10 ranger districts spent $850,676 within the local communities.

In addition, our employees' salaries totaled 10.7 million, which profited local businesses.

The new forest supervisor's office.

Supervisor's office employees move into new home

Our forest supervisor's office of the National Forests in North Carolina moved in July into a newly-constructed building located just off U.S. 19/23 and Broadway Street in Asheville.

Nearly 100 of our employees occupy about 80 percent of the 42,000-square-foot building, which also houses the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Appalachian Trail Conference.

In addition, this arrangement allows more opportunities for the three agencies to share information and work cooperatively on projects of joint interest.

Because of on-site parking and the building's proximity to U.S. 19/23, the public can easily find and access the headquarters. With the additional space in the foyer, we are able to sell forest education items through the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association.

The new building is also closer to the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station, making communication with this sister agency more time and cost efficient.

We also share administrative service with the research station, which increases efficiency.

Payments to Counties and Schools

COUNTY	25% FUND*	PILT**	TOTALS
Avery	$19,879.41	$21,094	$40,973.41
Buncombe	$22,101.97	$25,378	$47,479.97
Burke	$33,679.79	$34,801	$68,480.79
Caldwell	$34,641.45	$35,535	$70,076.45
Carteret	$25,185.63	$47,713	$72,898.63
Cherokee	$79,696.50	$66,893	$146,589.50
Clay	$56,216.90	$47,327	$103,543.90
Craven	$28,012.31	$45,316	$73,328.31
Davidson	$1,241.91	$689	$1,930.91
Graham	$96,872.27	$81,384	$178,256.27
Haywood	$47,964.17	$94,078	$142,042.17
Henderson	$12,148.92	$12,635	$24,783.92
Jackson	$65,624.31	$56,979	$122,603.31
Jones	$17,786.91	$28,775	$46,561.91
McDowell	$47,838.42	$49,026	$96,864.42
Macon	$130,443.64	$109,575	$240,018.64
Madison	$38,364.45	$39,112	$77,476.45
Mitchell	$13,067.73	$13,604	$26,671.73
Montgomery	$51,712.86	$28,568	$80,280.86
Randolph	$11,899.23	$6,605	$18,504.23
Swain	$18,346.89	$171,901	$190,247.89
Transylvania	$61,587.06	$63,104	$124,691.06
Watauga	$276.07	$6,982	$7,258.07
Yancey	$26,840.00	$27,945	$54,785.00
Totals	$941,428.80	$1,115,019	$2,056,346.90

*** 25 percent of National Forest receipts returned to local school systems.**
****Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT): 75 cents paid to counties for each acre of national forest and national park land.**

Each year the Forest Service returns to the State Treasury Office 25 percent of the money received from production of goods and services on national forest lands. The treasury office then distributes these funds to county school systems. The amount is spread on a pro-rated basis, according to national forest acreage per county. In addition, the Bureau of Land Management pays 75 cents per acre to counties with Federal land.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Compared with Fiscal Year '95 Objectives

Activity	Units	FY 95 Objectives	FY 95 Accomplished
FISH AND WILDLIFE			
Wildlife habitat improvement	acres	1,398	1,724
Construction of structures for W/L habitat imp.	each	59	55
Fish inventory	miles	55	155
Fish habitat protection	miles	30	30
T&E habitat improvement	acres	1,494	1,695
T&E habitat improvement structures	each	2	4
Wildlife habitat inventory	acres	1,983	1,983
RECREATION MANAGEMENT			
Recreational Resources adm. and maintenance	PAOT days*	3,600,000	3,600,000
Camp and picnic area administration	areas	93	93
Total recreation visits	each**		19,905,800
Trail construction	miles***	20	34
Trail maintenance	miles***	295	433
Total trail miles available	miles		1,734
ENGINEERING AND MINERALS			
Roads constructed	miles	NA	6
Roads reconstructed	miles	NA	35
Mineral permits and leases	each	179	9
TIMBER MANAGEMENT			
Timber offered	million board feet (mmbf)	36	32
Reforestation	acres	3,285	3,298
Timber stand improvement	acres	2,505	2,477
FIRE MANAGEMENT			
Fuels Management	acres	8,500	9,400

***Persons at one time (i.e., the number of people that can use the areas at the same time, times the number of days in the recreation season.)**
****Based upon new standards for estimating recreation visits.**
*****Includes maintenance by volunteers.**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Compared with Fiscal Year '95 Objectives

Activity	Units	FY 95 Objectives	FY 95 Accomplished
SOIL, WATER, AND AIR			
Watershed restoration and improvement	acres	145	166
Air Quality Permit Applications Reviewed	applications	1	3
HUMAN RESOURCES			
Job Corps Program Participants	daily enrollment	429	423
Youth Conservation Corps	enrollee weeks	56	56
Volunteers in NF program	enrollee years	--	128
Senior Community Service Employee Program	enrollee hours	325,752	325,752
SCSEP enrollee placements	each	59	67
Host program	enrollee years	--	6
LANDS			
Land acquisition	acres	991	1,200
Land exchange	acres	500	123
Property boundary location	miles	11	25
Landline maintenance	miles	122	285
Right-of-way acquisition	each	9	4
Special-use permits/easements	each	963	973
HERITAGE RESOURCES			
Archeological Survey	sites	250	307
ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT			
Ecological Inventory	acres	NA	9,105

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communiation of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications at (202) 720-2791.To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call (202) 720-7327 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

Forestry Report R8-FR58